



Guide to Publishing a Special Issue in an ACI Journal



American Concrete Institute

Introduction to Special Issues

Special issues are compilations of papers on a specific theme that are published in a single issue of an ACI Journal. Special issues serve to highlight timely research topics and emerging trends within these disciplines. Each special issue is guest-edited by one or more leading subject matter experts on that topic/theme.

The role of the Guest Editor is to ensure the quality of the special issue by developing the theme and topics, suggesting reviewers, reviewing abstract submissions, inviting the most relevant authors to submit a full paper, and by liaising with authors throughout the special issue process.

The Guest Editor should familiarize themselves with [ACI's Journal Publication Information](#). These procedures outline the required length, format, and processes for submitted manuscripts. These are the standard requirements for the Journal that must be adhered to by all authors.

To ensure the efficient development of a special issue, the process has been divided into the following phases:

- Phase 1: Proposing a Special Issue
- Phase 2: Call for Papers, Abstract Review, and Invitations to Submit
- Phase 3: Peer Review and Decisions
- Phase 4: Post-Editing and Publication

Phase 1: Proposing a Special Issue

One or more individuals interested in submitting a topic or theme for a special issue must submit a proposal to the [Editorial Board](#). In most cases, the individual(s) submitting the proposal will fill the Guest Editor role (up to two Guest Editors). The proposal should include the following information:

- Name of the ACI Journal(s) identified for the special issue
- Title of the special issue
- One-to-two-paragraph description of the special issue theme
- Detailed information about each Guest Editor
 - Complete contact information
 - Short professional biography
 - Relevant experience related to the proposed special issue topic
- Target publication date

All submitted proposals will be evaluated by the Editorial Board. The evaluation will consider the technical merit, relevance, timeliness, feasibility, and expertise of the Guest Editor. The decision will be either acceptance, rejection, or revision of the proposal.

Phase 2: Call for Papers, Abstract Review, and Invitations to Submit

Call for Papers

Once a special issue is approved by the Editorial Board, the Guest Editor is asked to prepare a [Call for Papers \(CFP\)](#).

The CFP should contain relevant information such as:

- Theme and short description of the special issue
- Relevant topics of interest
- Submission deadlines/instructions (minimum of 6 to 8 weeks after posting CFP)
- Guest Editor contact information
- Requested submission information including:
 - Author/co-author names, affiliations, and contact information
 - Abstract with a maximum length of 300 words

The Guest Editor must submit the CFP to the [Managing Editor](#) of the ACI Journal for publication in *Concrete International*, on the ACI website, and through the appropriate marketing channels. The Guest Editor is encouraged to circulate the CFP among their own network, relevant groups, and other industry websites and invite potential authors to submit an abstract.

Abstract Review

At the conclusion of the CFP deadline, the Guest Editor will organize the titles, abstracts, and author information into an [Abstract Review Worksheet](#) for further evaluation. The Guest Editor will review each submission to determine if the abstract meets the theme and scope of the special issue. The average acceptance rate for publication in the ACI Journals is approximately 35% and each issue of the Journal publishes between 12 and 24 individual papers. The Guest Editor should consider these figures when determining how many authors to invite to submit a full paper.

Invitations to Submit

If the submission meets the theme and scope of the special issue, the Guest Editor will invite the author to submit their full paper to the ACI Journal to undergo peer-review. The Guest Editor must notify authors of their decision within 2 weeks of the CFP deadline.

When inviting an author to submit a full paper, the Guest Editor must include the following information in their correspondence:

- Deadline for authors to submit their completed paper (approximately 3 months)
- Link to [ACI Journal Publication Information](#) for length, format, and submission instructions
- How to name their paper in ScholarOne:
- "Special Issue: [Insert Special Issue Theme]: [Insert Manuscript Title]"

The Guest Editor must send the Managing Editor the final Abstract Review Worksheet, indicating which authors have been invited to submit their manuscript. This worksheet is used by ACI staff as a reference tool for tracking special issue submissions within the ACI manuscript management system.

Phase 3: Peer Review and Decisions

Peer-Review Process

Through ScholarOne, ACI's manuscript management provider, ACI will assign peer reviewers to each special issue paper. The Guest Editor is encouraged to prepare a list of reviewers with expert knowledge of the special issue theme/topic and send it to the Managing Editor. If the Guest Editor provides a list of reviewers, ACI will assign up to two reviewers from the Guest Editor list and two additional reviewers from the ScholarOne list. If the Guest Editor does not provide a list of reviewers or the reviewer list is short, then existing reviewers from ScholarOne will be supplemented. Please note, all reviewers (including those suggested by the Guest Editor) must be registered in ScholarOne to peer-review a manuscript. Reviewers can create accounts through the [ACI ScholarOne Portal](#).

To ensure timely publication, reviewers are given 1 month to review their assigned paper and submit the review form through ScholarOne. Upon request, reviewers may be given an additional 2 weeks to complete their review. In the event a reviewer has exhausted their review time and cannot complete the review, the Guest Editor may intervene as either the reviewer or recommend a reviewer who can complete the review in a short amount of time.

Decisions

After the peer-review process has been completed, a decision will be made on publication of the paper. The decision will either be accepted, minor revisions requested, major revisions requested, or declined. Authors of accepted papers will be requested to submit the final manuscript within 14 days. Authors of papers with minor revisions will receive reviewer comments so changes can be incorporated and requested to submit the revised manuscript within 21 days. Authors of papers with major revisions must revise the paper addressing reviewer comments and resubmit the revised manuscript within 30 days for another round of peer review and decisions. The Guest Editor will be consulted on any papers that are likely to be declined for further evaluation before a decision is made. Declined papers cannot be resubmitted and revisions will not be accepted.

An invited paper that is submitted and approved for publication may fall out of the scope of the special issue, and the Guest Editor may elect to pull the paper from the special issue. In these instances, the paper will be published in a standard issue of the journal.

Phase 4: Post-Editing and Publication

After the special issue papers have been reviewed, revised, and accepted for publication and all final manuscripts have been received by ACI, the in-house production team will confirm all copyright transfer forms have been received before moving each paper into post-editing. During post-editing, ACI Editors will lightly copyedit and layout each manuscript, perform quality checks, and prepare proofs. Each author will receive a proof and have 7 days to return any corrections. Once all proofs are returned and corrections have been made, the issue will be published.

The post-editing and publication process typically takes 2 to 4 months to complete.

Conclusion

Special issues are a vital component of ACI Journals that bring timely research topics and emerging trends in these disciplines to a global audience and increase the Journals' reach and impact.

The Guest Editor plays a vital role in the development and pursuit of each special issue. These guidelines should help the Guest Editor understand their role in producing a successful special issue.

